

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 AID-05 CCO-00 FBO-02 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NIC-01 NSC-05 SP-02 OCE-00 OPR-01 PA-01

USSS-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-15 SY-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2148

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14361

USIAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: USIS SITREP

FOR MCGINLEY IAA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 14238

1. FOLLOWING EXPLOSIONS IN MUNICIPALITY BUILDING AS WELL AS WABE SHABELLE HOTEL YESTERDAY, WE CLOSED USIS PREMISES FOR REMAINDER OF AFTERNOON. REASONS FOR THIS ACTION WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A) USIS BUILDING WAS BADLY ROCKED BY BLAST; TWO WINDOWS WERE BROKEN IN FILM SECTION AND TWO EMPLOYEES WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED. FILM SUPERVISOR WAS THROWN OUT OF HIS CHAIR AND HIT ON BACK BY FLYING GLASS. B) ALL EMPLOYEES, ESPECIALLY FSL'S, WERE EMOTIONALLY UPSET BY INCIDENT. SOME HAD FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WHO WORKED IN MUNICIPALITY BUILDING. C) SECOND EXPLOSION AT DOWNTOWN HOTEL INDICATED WHAT COULD HAVE POSSIBLY BEEN WIDESPREAD TERRORIST ACTIVITY AROUND CITY AND USIS HIGHLY VULNERABLE TARGET. D) AS RESULT OF MUNICIPALITY BLAST, HUGE CROWDS GATHERED AROUND USIS OFFICES AND REMAINED THERE ALL AFTERNOON.

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2. DUE UNCERTAIN SITUATION, WE HAVE DECIDED CLOSE LIBRARY AND

FILM SECTION FOR AT LEAST ONE WEEK PERIOD. POST CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF "LIMITED" ACTIVITY IN BOTH THESE AREAS, BUT DECIDED AGAINST THIS PROCEDURE SINCE IT WOULD INVOLVE THOROUGH SEARCHES OF ALL INDIVIDUALS ENTERING LIBRARY AND FILM SECTION. THIS WOULD GIVE US "FORTRESS" IMAGE, WHICH WE FEEL WOULD NOT BE IN KEEPING WITH USIS POLICY. WE HAVE, THEREFORE, CLOSED BOTH OPERATIONS TO PUBLIC, INDICATING CLOSURE IS "FOR YEAR END INVENTORY PURPOSES."

3. DUE TIGHT SECURITY AROUND ALL PUBLIC BUILDINGS, WE ARE ALSO UNABLE CONTINUE DISTRIBUTION USIS MATERIALS. ALL VEHICLES, PACKAGES, ETC., ENTERING GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS BEING SUBJECTED TO THOROUGH AND LENGTHY SEARCHES. IN ADDITION, SINCE RECENT BOMBINGS AIMED AT GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED FACILITIES, WE DO NOT WISH TO EXPOSE OUR EMPLOYEES TO POSSIBLE DANGER.

4. SINCE USIS SHARES PREMISES WITH OTHER TENANTS, AND DUE TO FACT BUILDING IS BADLY LACKING IN SAFETY FEATURES, WE HAVE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER, MADE THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF OUR IMMEDIATE NEEDS. DETAILS BEING SENT VIA SEPTTEL.

COMMENT

FOLLOWING IS OUR ASSESSMENT AS RELATES USIS SITUATION. POST FEELS MAINTENANCE LOW PROFILE AT THIS TIME PARTICULARLY CRUCIAL. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE TAKEN OUTSPOKEN AND HOSTILE ANTI-REGIME STANCE SINCE KILLING OF GENERAL AMAN AND EXECUTION OF SIXTY FORMER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS. PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO PREVENT BOMBINGS HEIGHTENED THIS FEELING. CURRENTLY OUR CONTACTS INFORM US THAT EVEN MOST ARDENT PMG SUPPORTERS FEEL SITUATION IS NOW OUT OF HAND AND ARE BLAMING MILITARY FOR CURRENT CHAOTIC SITUATION. NUMEROUS SOURCES REPORT ELF (WHICH WE HEAR NOW APPARENTLY INCLUDES EVEN AMHARA SYMPATHIZERS) ARE WIDESPREAD IN ADDIS AND THAT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES WILL INCREASE. PMG'S LIKELY RECOURSE AT THIS POINT IS FURTHER VIOLENCE, WHICH WILL ONLY EXACERBATE UNDERCURRENT OF HOSTILITY THAT IS BOILING IN ALL SEGMENTS OF POPULATION AGAINST THE MILITARY. AN EXAMPLE OF THE PMG'S NEW "POLICY" IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON RADIO AND TELEVISION LAST NIGHT FOLLOWING THE BOMBINGS. BROADCASTS SAID CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE ALARMED BY SOUNDS OF GUN-

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FIRE IN THE CITY BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO HUNT DOWN "THE ENEMIES OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE..." DUE HIGH USIS VISIBILITY -- AND VULNERABILITY -- WE FEEL IT IS EXTREMELY RISKY AT THIS TIME FOR USIS TO SHOW ANY REPEAT ANY OFFICIAL SUPPORT FOR THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT, SUCH AS SUPPLYING FILMS. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED IN EVALUATING OUR POSITION HERE, IS THAT SINCE THE GOVERNMENT HAS FORTIFIED ALL PUBLIC FACILITIES IN THE CITY, THE ELF AND OTHER ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUPS MAY LIKELY

BE FORCED TO SEEK OUT NON-GOVERNMENT TARGETS IN THE FUTURE.

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